/67 cont./

842 b) An unquestionable fact is the fertility of the Indian woman. From the investigations made, there was reported to us only one instance of an individual's sending his wife back as sterile, the judgment, evidently, of the husband. In spite of the advantages or convenience of the Indian woman who does not want to have many children (and we have heard from their lips several times this declaration: "it is ugly to have many children"), and the practices that they use to space each delivery 2, 3, and even 4 or more years apart, the presence of numerous children in each povoado pleasantly surprises us. In our investigations we found a vigorous Indian man about 45 years of age, who had 11 children (24).

[171] 24. It is a matter of the Indian Agostinho Barbosa of the Taryana tribe, in Iauareté. It is true that in December of 1948 four of his 11 children had already died.

163 On one of our lists of individuals of various tribes, in the casual order in which the anthropometric measurements were made, 20 married people among men and women, of about 35 years of age or older, presented a total of 101 children. Therefore an average of 5 children per couple is shown. It is to be noted that only 18 dead children, without discrimi-
161 nation as to age, appear on this same list. If we imagine that all adults marry (ordinarily after 20 years of age) (25),

[587] 25. There was reported to us only the case of one man who did not find a wife; it is to be noted, however, that it was a matter of a widower.

and that the two sexes more or less correspond in number, it should be concluded that the population has

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partly explained by the environment in which they live – has resulted in the small unconnected settlements typical of the Indians of this region.

A headman is responsible for the provision and organization of the household. He arranges the building of the great *malocas* when it is necessary to move. He also oversees festivals and councils. In some households his actual power appeared to be slight, and it seemed to us that the average Tukano did more or less exactly as he pleased.

In the event of a headman dying, a festival is normally held in his honour after the burial. A new headman is then elected, usually the eldest son of the chief, though this decision depends on the council of elders of the household.

If the headman is the secular authority, the shaman is responsible as a spiritual one, in that he is always counteracting the influence of the evil spirits. He also cures the sick and diseased and in the event of death names the person responsible, so that revenge may be exacted. Living in a world apart, he keeps somewhat aloof from his fellow tribesmen and to enhance this sense of separation he may wear distinguishing marks.

Tukano families are small, there are seldom more than two or three children. Why more do not survive is difficult to explain, but life in the Amazonian forest is rigorous and the Indian believes that if a child cannot stand hardship at the moment of birth, it will not be able to stand that of later life. The normal custom of washing the new-born child in a stream is sometimes fatal. Moreover, should the child have any blemish or disfiguration – signs of evil to the Indians – it is all too easy for the mother to hold the infant beneath the water till it drowns. Should she have twins, this will also be the fate of the second-born, or it will be left in the forest to die. For to have more than one child at a time is to be like the animals of the forest – a terrible disgrace. In some *malocas* a dearth of children was very noticeable, especially in the lower areas of the river where the *caucheros* had greater influence.

The children assume adult responsibilities at a very early age. When we were waiting in the deserted *maloca* we noticed a small thatched shelter close to the women's entrance. It was bare and empty, and Horacio told us that this was probably a menstrual hut. They were common among the tribes in the Llanos and the women also retired to them during childbirth. Perhaps the Tukano had the same custom, but we learnt no more.

We saw no puberty rites though we did hear of a ceremony called Jurupari[1]. At certain seasons in the year the men leave for the forest to collect baskets full of chrysalises, *mojojoy*. When the women hear the men returning to the *maloca* they run screaming to the nearest plantation. Here they remain while the ceremony takes place, for they believe that the men have brought Jurupari, their god, with them, and if they or their children should see him, they will die. The men play long seven-foot flutes. One of these trumpet-like

[1] Jurupari in fact seems to be '*lingua general*' for god – and is not peculiar to the Tukano.